Crowther-Beynon, Vernon Bryan

[Beckenham, Kent, England]

1936

14 Park Rd
Beckenham
Kent
England

Ap. 19. '36

Dear Sir

Some time ago I purchased from a London coin-dealer some 20 examples of a kind of brass piece, the like of which neither he nor I had previously met with. Thinking they might turn out to be money-weights (a subject I am greatly interested in) I bought the whole collection. Since then I have submitted specimens to a number of experts known to me either by correspondence or personally, but none of them has seen similar

pieces, while their opinions as
to the true explanation varies
considerably. Mons. Dieudonné
(Paris Bibliothèque nationale) and
Mr Van Kerkwyk (late recently
curator at the Hague national
coin cabinet) opine that they
are weights, whereas M. Victor
Jonghen of Brussels and the
British museum people, as well as
several continental collectors,
believe them to be brass counterfeits
of gold coins of Mexico & some
S. American State, intended to

deceive the ignorant natives of those parts! I have presented specimens to the Paris, Brussels & Hague collections & they have excited some interest but the problem is still unsolved. It was suggested to me that the Metropolitan Museum at New York might be able to throw light on the matter but it appears that we were in error in thinking that this museum included a Numismatic Department. I received the enclosed letter from the Secretary in which he suggests my applying to your Society. Do you think the matter of

sufficient interest - if you can enlighten me on the matter, I shall be most pleased if you will accept the specimen I sent to the Metropolitan Museum for your collection. Meanwhile I enclose rubbings of 2 further examples. You will observe that the type - crude & inartistic as it is - is rather suggestive of the Spanish Peninsular, with (possibly) an attempt at the fleur-de-lis flanking the Spanish Arms on the reverse. The fact that these pieces vary in shape & weight rather militate against the money-weight

theory. But I believe there are
certain very roughly executed
S. American
Gold pieces, known in Belgium
as "matte" or "matten" to which
these things bear some resemblance.
If they are indeed attributable
to some S. American State, it
is possible that your U. S. A.
numismatists may be more
familiar with them than
the European collectors of
Should be most grateful for any

explanation a interpretation which you may be able to give.

I have added to Mr Kent's letter a note authorizing him to handover the "coin" to you, if you are willing to accept it for your Society's cabinet. In the event of its proving of little interest as of a Cinta familiar type of object, you

must forgive me.

Yours truly

Vernon B. Crowther-Beynon

F.S.A., President, British

Numismatic Society — a

member of the Council of the

Royal Numismatic Society.

Do the Secretary

American Numismatic Soc?

New York City

May 13, 1936

Vernon B. Crowther-Beynon, Esq.,
14 Park Road,
Beckenham, Kent,
ENGLAND

Dear Sir:

Your letter of April 19th at hand and we communicated with the Metropolitan Museum and they have sent us the brass puzzle.

I have never seen anything quite like this piece and I have seen a great many Spanish-American coins. At first glance it looks like a money weight and possibly it is, but I doubt it. I have seen odd silver coins a good deal on the same order that I always have considered as contemporary counterfeits. The piece you sent us shows no traces of gilding and I am consequently at a loss in determining that they were made for counterfeits of gold coins, unless possibly the pieces were hidden or put away before they were gold-plaed, or gold-washed.

For a while I thought they might be modern work but I have rejected this idea. All of this leaves me much up in the air and I am afraid that I cannot help you out in determing just what they are or what they were made for.

We are very glad to have this piece and I wish to thank you for presenting it to us.

Very truly yours,

Curator

HW ks